

Washington, DC - Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today introduced legislation that would exempt ordinary books from a regulation in the recently-enacted Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (CPSIA). The CPSIA seeks to protect children from the dangers associated with products containing unreasonable levels of lead, by imposing lead standards and testing requirements, but the Consumer Product Safety Commission has interpreted the CPSIA to apply to all children's books. Under the CPSIA, libraries and other organizations have been forced to restrict access to children's books.

"Access to books is critical to child development and education," said Fortenberry. "While the Consumer Product Safety Commission has worked diligently to ensure our children can play without risk from toxic lead-ridden products, these lead rules were never intended to force libraries to pull their collections. There is no credible evidence to suggest that children's books contain harmful amounts of lead, and this bill clarifies the CPSIA to allow children's books to remain on library shelves for the benefit of millions of our youth."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have determined there is minimal risk to children from lead in ordinary books, and comprehensive testing by accredited laboratories of finished books and component materials have found total lead content at levels considered non-detectable or well below the thresholds in the CPSIA.

Fortenberry is a member of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

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